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THE NEW DEPARTMENT OF PRINTS

THE Trustees of the Museum have determined to enlarge the collection of prints now in its possession to the dimensions of a department. This is no new departure for the Museum. Prints have been included among its collections ever since William L. Andrews made his first gift of 92 Haden and Whistler prints in 1883, but up to the present time no special emphasis has been placed on this branch of art.

The establishment of this department follows the receipt of a letter signed by H. Harper Benedict, Theodore DeWitt, Francis L. Hine, Edward G. Kennedy, J. H. Norrie, H. McM. Painter, A. W. Scholle, Willard Straight, and Felix M. Warburg, among others, from which the following paragraphs are quoted:

We and others who are interested in prints have long felt that there ought to be in the Metropolitan Museum of Art a Print Department, notable for prints of artistic quality rather than of utilitarian purpose. It is, we think, a growing conviction that the principal museum of the country should embrace in its scope and collections every branch of the fine arts. The etchings of Rembrandt and other old masters seem to us of great importance in connection with their oil paintings as showing the range of their achievements and illustrating the varied art of their times, and we hold a similar opinion with regard to the prints by modern artists—Whistler, Zorn, and Cameron, for example.

We know something of the progress already made by the Museum in acquiring prints, notably in its collection of Japanese color prints, and it has occurred to us that inasmuch as ample space for the purpose can apparently be provided by the Museum in the new wing which is approaching completion, now is an opportune time to enlarge the collection of prints which the Museum already possesses to the

dimensions of a Print Department. We are prepared to say that if such a department is established, preferably limited in its scope to prints of distinctly artistic quality, we and others will gladly join in substantial aid in its organization and future development.

The Museum print collection, according to present plans, will be limited strictly to prints of artistic quality which are within the scope of an art museum. It will not include views or costumes or other prints the chief interest in which is historical, archaeological, or other than artistic.

Of this newly created department William M. Ivins, Jr., was appointed Curator at the meeting of the Trustees of the Museum on December 18. Mr. Ivins is a son of the late William M. Ivins of this city. He graduated at Harvard College in 1901, and at the Columbia Law School in 1907. Although his vocation has been the law, his serious interest in prints began when he was an undergraduate at Harvard and has continued up to the present time. He has not only familiarized himself with many of the important public and private collections of Europe and America, but has been a thorough student of the literature of the subject, as well as the technical processes employed in the various branches of the art. Since 1903 he has been an active member of the Grolier Club, and is at present chairman of the committee that has charge of its exhibitions. In the judgment of the authorities of the Museum, as well as of private collectors in this city, he is exceptionally well qualified for the work he is about to undertake, which will be to build up a department of prints upon the same high standard that has been established for the other collections of the Museum, and to stimulate and broaden public interest in the subject.

Already the interest felt in this new department has come to a gratifying expression in the offer of several gifts of prints. These are included in the List of Accessions this month, and will receive more extended notice in the next issue.